

There can be no greater challenge to us today than improving our education system throughout the country. It struck me as I read the editorial that this calls the attention of all of us to the fact that no matter what kind of programs we have, how much money we spend, what kind of national goals we adopt and try to implement, if we do not have good, qualified, conscientious, and committed teachers in the classrooms of the schools of America, we are not going to have a good education system. They are the cornerstone of our education system in America.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the New York Times editorial of Saturday to which I refer be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Times, Jan. 7, 1995]

A NATIONAL REWARD FOR GOOD TEACHERS

Ever since the mid-1980's, when a series of landmark studies called for drastic changes in the nation's schools, American educators have been seeking ways to raise teaching standards. That effort bore its first fruit this week when 81 gifted teachers were awarded national teaching certification at a ceremony in Washington.

The ceremony may turn out to be a pivotal moment in the history of American education. Many educators hope that the 81 recipients will be the first small vanguard of a new generation of highly qualified teachers who, in turn, will nourish better schools and better students.

Until Thursday, no teacher possessed a national certificate. Public school teachers are certified by states and localities. One hope is that recipients will be able to move from state to state without facing recertification. Another is that states and localities will reward certificate-holders with higher pay, thus offering an incentive to other teachers.

But the real value of the certificate may have been identified by Arthur Levine, the president of Teachers College at Columbia University. These first awards, he said, "provide some sense that around the country there is some agreement on what makes for a good teacher."

The certificates grew out of a report called "A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century," which led to the creation of a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in 1987. The idea was to raise standards for teachers and elevate their status, treating them more like doctors and other professionals.

The board then set about creating a licensing system. The heart of the system is an exhaustive series of tests aimed at finding out how teachers teach and evaluating their effectiveness.

A group of 539 volunteers has now completed tests for English-language specialists and generalists who teach early adolescents. The 81 winners came from the generally/early adolescent category, and more are scheduled to follow among the English teachers.

The volunteers submitted portfolios of their work—videotapes of classroom techniques, examples of their students' work, references from colleagues and written self-assessments. They were also tested on subject matter and teaching techniques. Participants found that the rigorous assessment process was itself an exercise in professional growth.

Preparing for the test costs money. At least eight states have already taken action

to support or reward teachers who seek national board certification. Others should follow suit. If stronger teaching is the most important element in improving schools—and most educators believe it is—then the certification process is certain to give a huge boost to the effort to give American schoolchildren a better deal than they now receive.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business for not to exceed 90 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak therein for not to exceed 10 minutes each.

Mr. THOMAS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The distinguished Senator from Wyoming [Mr. THOMAS] is recognized.

A HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, it is with a great deal of pride and humility that I rise today as Wyoming's newest Senator. It is a great honor, of course, to be here. I take the floor to speak about a matter which is of great concern to me and all of us, and that is the future of this country. We have a historic opportunity to make real changes in the way the Federal Government operates and in how the American people perceive their Government. It seems to me that we either move boldly forward with the changes demanded by the electorate last November 8, or we squander the only real, true chance of restoring the American people's confidence in their Government.

The true test of government, it seems to me, is how responsive it is to the will of the voters. Mr. President, as I traveled Wyoming these last few months and talked to the folks from Cheyenne to Cody, I heard a recurring theme from my constituents. Over and over, they told me to get Government out of their lives, to restore fiscal responsibility to Washington, and above all else, to put an end to business as usual.

Judging by the results of the last election, it was a common message throughout the country. There should be no doubt about the message sent to Washington last November, and that was we need less government, less expensive government. People are tired of the status quo, and they want changes in how Government operates.

Unfortunately, as we all know, government in modern times has become increasingly resistant to change. As I read history, it is not unusual for voters to call for change. They did so about every generation in the 1800's up into the 1900's, until about 1930 when the Federal Government began to get much larger. As it has become a more and more pervasive part of our lives, to where it is now, with the size of the Federal Government plus the outside bureaucracies that have been built up

through the decades, it becomes more and more difficult to change.

These constituencies and the Government stubbornly fight to protect their piece of the Federal funding pie. Federal programs do not die; they do not even fade away. They grow and grow.

As the Federal Government has grown, the American people have grown increasingly disenfranchised. Not only do Americans distrust their Government, but many do not even bother to vote because they do not believe their vote can help effect change. I suppose that is because in past elections, change has not come about and the direction the country has remained much the same. We cannot repeat that mistake.

The first lesson we must learn is that we cannot continue to do the same things, to follow the same procedures, and expect different results. If we want to change the direction this country is moving, then we have to make procedural changes in the Government.

Many argue that we do not need a balanced budget amendment, that we simply ought to balance the budget. Let me suggest to you that for 40 years that has not worked. Indeed, in my opinion, there does need to be a change in procedure and there does need to be some discipline that causes us to have a balanced budget.

We have made a good start. We will pass a measure that causes Congress to live under the same laws that it mandated for others. Next week, we will move to eliminate unfunded Federal mandates. We need to pass a balanced budget amendment and give the President line-item-veto authority. As we demand a smaller Federal Government, we need to lead by example and reduce the congressional bureaucracy.

The American people support these changes. They will go a long way toward building the base from which to bring fundamental change to every sector of the Government.

Mr. President, there will be many important issues debated on the floor of the Senate over the next 2 years. Some of my priorities include health care reform, tax reduction, welfare reform, and reducing the growth of Federal ownership of public lands, to name just a few. But no issue is as important as the structural changes I mentioned earlier.

Without significant change in the way the Congress and the Federal Government operates, other important changes in policy will be difficult. The American people will be watching closely to see if we respond to their cry for change. I certainly heard that message in Wyoming loud and clear. I hope that this time, Washington is listening, as well.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.